



Three Rivers Fire District  
50 Springfield Street  
Three Rivers, MA 01080

# Prudential Committee Minutes

April 17, 2024

Chairman Norman Czech called a meeting of the Prudential Committee to order at 6:30 p.m.

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Norman Czech; Prudential Committee Chairman  
Stephen Chiacchia; Prudential Committee Vice Chairman  
Andrea Sullivan; Prudential Committee Clerk  
Steve Nodurf; Three Rivers Interim Fire Chief

Nicole Dewberry; Three Rivers Water Superintendent  
Sherrie Bellefleur; Three Rivers Recording Secretary  
Guy Bellefleur; District Clerk

## **Roll Call**

Lorinda Baker: District Treasurer was not at this evening's meeting but left her Report of the Treasurer with the Board.

## **The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.**

## **Approval of Minutes**

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the March 20, 2024, meeting.

**MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To approve the March 20, 2024, minutes to the meeting. 3-0-0**

The Prudential Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the March 28, 2024, meeting.

**MOTION (CHACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To approve the March 28, 2024, minutes to the meeting. 3-0-0**

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Committee Reports**

None

## **New Business:**

Met with the Bondsville Water Commissioners. Bob Flagg began his discussion speaking of some history and how the tank size in Bondsville has always required them, needing Three Rivers for back up to supply water when needed. The interconnection project has made this attainable. The current tank in Bondsville no longer needs to exist, it is old and in poor condition. In all of the studies that have been done with Thorndike and Bondsville it shows the best place to put a tank is on the ridge of Jim Ash Road & Summer Street. At this elevation they could get a tank high enough to match the Three Rivers tank. The interconnection was a great thing to do according to Mr. Flagg. If Water Superintendent Nicole Dewberry had a water main break in Three Rivers, she could turn the interconnection on and feed the rest of the town, while repairing the break. This could go both ways for the towns.

If Bondsville puts their tank at the same elevation as Three Rivers tanks, looking at 600,000 gallons (engineers say Bondsville needs that much). Currently the need for that size does not exist but for fire protection and growth having a little bit more is good. This will help Bondsville achieve pressures equal to Three Rivers also.

Mr. Flagg mentioned another concern and that is with the State pushing PFAS testing. Bondsville passed the first round of testing but Three Rivers is struggling a bit with that. The EPA just dropped the number from 10 down to 4, forcing all of us to have to

treat all of our drinking water. In the meantime, while Three Rivers is dealing with this problem, the state would allow us to be able to turn on the interconnection and blend Bondsville water with Three Rivers to then bring the PFAS number down.

Chairman Norman Czech spoke of a conversation he had with Ms. Dewberry about the need Three Rivers even has now for two tanks. Does our District really need to spend the money on two tanks when Bondsville's tank is going up with our one tank and the interconnection with same pressures.

This is exactly where the Bondsville Commissioners want to go, and it is coming to fruition now. We are going to be able to impact each other so positively along with building up our customer bases so much more. Thorndike is going to benefit also. We are going to be all supporting each other while we all do our own thing. It is just good common sense to have a good distribution system that we can manipulate to whatever is needed.

Mr. Flagg has been doing what he does for over 30 years with Bondsville and Thorndike, not enough is said that the monies that we have to work on to get to the ending result, Flagg admires all of the Villages for what they have done with what little money they have to do it with. There is rumor that the villages do not work together but that is wrong, we all work together. We need to let the the community know this, we are getting a bad press on this. We are all working on a better system for the villages.

There is a lot of new growth coming to Thorndike and Bondsville, and if the train does come through, we are going to see a lot of Influx from people moving here because of the price.

Behind Tables houses will be coming in but that is all set and accounted for as far as the water goes, according to Bondsville. One concern of Three Rivers is our wells are right there, will it affect our water? Bondsville cannot comment on that tonight, but Mr. Czech did assure all that any development will need to go through the planning board. Ms. Dewberry is concerned about this also and it could pose a problem for our wells if homeowners use chemicals on their lawns that then get into our water table. This is going off topic leaving this discussion to end.

Ms. Dewberry would like to reserve any comments until she can view what the engineers reveal moving forward.

Fire Chief Nodurf adds that if a fully involved fire happened our water tanks would be empty in about 20 minutes.

Bondsville and Thorndike would like to be informed going forward of all progress. Once Bondsville gets going and the site has been set the actual construction is going to go fast.

## **Report of the Treasurer**

The Board reviewed the report of the treasurer for March 2024.

**Water Department:** Water receipts are not included due to the timing. They will be included in next month's report.

Expenses with the Water Department are due to water meter replacements and that is a good thing.

**Fire Department:** Everything looks good.

**District:** Everything looks good.

**MOTION (CHIAACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To accept the Treasurers Report for March 2024. Approved. 3-0-0**

**MOTION (CHIAACCHIA; SULLIVAN): To accept the Treasurers Warrant for March 2024. Approved. 3-0-0**

## **Report of the Fire Chief**

Fire Chief Steve Nodurf read his March 2024 Report of the Fire Chief.

Fire prevention and code enforcement led to a routine inspection for presale on a property that is no longer going to be able to be sold. Chief went for a smoke and carbon monoxide compliance and the company that did the work passed the property with flying colors, Chief gave him the certificate and got in his car and called the Building Department and the Board of Health. The building has since been condemned. Tenants will have to be relocated.

### **Administration:**

- EMS Upgrade Project
- Ongoing Grant Writing Fire Prevention and Safety
- HCMAA Meeting
- ESO Upgrade Project
- Requesting Quotes for Lighting Upgrade

### **Fire Prevention/Education:**

- Code Enforcement 17 – 23 Springfield Street (ongoing)

- Occupancy Inspections with the Building Commissioner and Board of Health
- Follow-up with Sherman Oil on work to be completed.
- 4 26F Pre-sale Inspections
- 1 Oil Burner Inspection
- 3 Smoke Detectors were installed at 2054 Oak Street.

**Operations:**

- 20 Emergency Incidents
- Sent SCBA Bottles out for Hydrostatic Testing.
- Took delivery of new 35' Ladder

**Training:**

- EFR Training for Members Needing Certification
- Scenario work for EMS responses.
- Firefighter 1 Qualifications
- Ropes and Knots
- Driver Training

**Events:**

- Hampden County School of Science Lecture.
- Fire Prevention Event at Hampton Ponds.
- Stop the Bleed Instructor Class.
- Assisting at the Monson Recruit Class.

The old Pinocchio's property on Bridge St has sold and the fire department was there performing inspections. The plan is in place for this property to reopen as a restaurant with a liquor license.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To accept the report of the Fire Chief Steve Nodurf for March 2024. Approved 3-0-0**

**Report of the Water Superintendent**

Nicole Dewberry read her Report of the Water Superintendent for March 2024.

**Status of Water Systems:**

- There is a contagious fungus growing on our trees on Sykes Street. This fungus splits the tree open to spread spores, which invites in other issues, which slowly kills the trees. Therefore, Mac took down the affected trees that are on the lawn area at the pump station. They are too wet to burn, and so we'll leave them there for the foreseeable future (if we pay to have them removed then the fungus could spread). There are other trees on the property with the fungus too, and so we notified the Conservation Dept. They will look into it further to determine whether or not they wish to take any action.
- It has been over two years since chlorine was installed. At that time, DEP asked us to increase the frequency of some of our samples. Since sample results have been fine, I requested a reduction in that frequency. DEP approved the reduction of sampling of chlorine disinfection byproducts from once per year to once every three years. They requested some additional information about our lead and copper sampling, and so hopefully during the next meeting Ms. Dewberry will be able to report that they have reduced the frequency of those samples too. *Update approximately 2 hours prior to this meeting the DEP did approve to reduce the frequency of those samples.*

**Tank Project**

- As you're aware, our appeal was successful, and we received the State Revolving Fund (SRF) grant to mitigate and restore the drinking water storage tanks.
- May we move forward with working with Haley Ward? As a first step, I will request an agreement and ask the attorney to review it.

Ms. Sullivan added that since Tate & Howard did a study years back with pictures do, we really need to pay another to do the same thing? We can reuse some of the previous study. We will need an engineer to do the rest. Quotes have come in and they are almost exact. The Board would like Ms. Dewberry to select who she'd be most comfortable working with.

Chairman Czech asked Ms. Dewberry who she planned to have do the Rate Study after July of this year. She is looking into rural water money that may be available for this plan. We are part of the Mass Rural Water Association, and they are trying to learn how to do a rate study themselves. So, to answer Chairman Ms. Dewberry is not sure yet.

Ms. Dewberry has submitted an application to the USDA. They should reply to us by next month. She thinks we may want to get started on a working contract because if they do get back to us by next month we can start moving forward.

She has also said that we will need a vote to say we do want the State Revolving Fund money. Chairman Czech has said he's waiting to hear back from the Finance Committee Chairman to set a meeting.

- Deadlines to keep in mind:
  - the local appropriation vote, along with the corresponding documents. This must occur soon.
  - the design at 50% completion, and the application are due in October.
- Ms. Dewberry previously submitted our application to the USDA, and they hope to be able to reply to us by next month.

#### **Annual Raise**

- Previously you decided to align the annual raise with the annual budget. Therefore, this may be a good time to begin thinking about the annual raise that would begin during July.

#### **Overdue Accounts**

- Regarding the customers who have stopped paying according to their payment plans, do you have any revisions to the letter that we will send to them? The Board has said they approve of this letter.

#### **Hydrant Use Charge**

- Revise rate?
- Charge for the use of the meter and backflow device too? This is discussions on the hydrant at Chudy's. A short discussion took place on whether or not to do this and if so how much do we charge. The Board asked Ms. Dewberry to gather more information on this before we move forward with doing this.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To accept the report of the Water Superintendent for March 2024. Approved 3-0-0**

### **Board Members Comments:**

Vice Chairman Steve Chiacchia has commented on the new water bill saying it looks very professional.

### **New Business:**

#### **Special Election to Fill Vacancy:**

Steve Chiacchia has checked with the attorney, and we must go with C: if less than 45 days before the Annual District Meeting the vacancy should be filled by a legend in article 1 section 6. Mr. Chiacchia leaves in June so this will fall under C. This will be at our July meeting or maybe June.

Brought to the attention of Mr. Czech is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in June is a holiday. We will reschedule that regular monthly meeting to June 20<sup>th</sup>, Thursday this month.

Water Department Administrative Assistant, Sam Hoy spoke about an invoice that is owed by an elderly couple. The couple pays \$50.00 every check they get but it is not covering the whole balance still owed by them. Ms. Hoy has also said that there are other family members residing with this elderly couple. She is looking for some direction on how to handle this situation like maybe a lien against their home. This will result in if the home ever sells the bill would be paid to the water department that is owed.

#### **Discussion on Fire Chief's Position:**

Mr. Chiacchia feels we have an individual to fill the Fire Chief position and believes he is qualified with his years of service with the fire department and ambulance and his military background. He does not have the experience of other chiefs but thinks that Steve Nodurf could fill the position with the guidance from Dave Mottor and he likes the comments on pursuing the Chiefs credentials through the Mass Fire Chiefs. Mass Fire chiefs is not currently being offered but as soon as it is Steve Nodurf will sign up.

A motion was made, and Congratulation were shared.

A start date was discussed and after a two-week notice at Palmer Ambulance Mr. Nodurf feels he could start approximately in the next couple of weeks.

A meeting date was discussed, and this resulted on Monday, April 29, 2024 at 7:00 pm. This will be an Executive Session Meeting.

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To appoint the Interim Fire Chief Steve Nodurf the Full Time Fire Chief pending contract negotiations. Approved 3-0-0**

**Old Business:**

Interim Fire Chief Nodurf talked of the Finance Committee Meeting and the budget and Capital Growth Plan that he provided wondering if there has been any feedback on that. Chief Nodurf did some research on Commercial Loan Rates to provide ways he could pay for items in his Capital Growth Plan. Mr. Chiacchia did say that the Commercial Loan Rates fluctuate and right now the rates are very high. They may be going down in the future but right now interest rates are high. Rates for Municipality are lower than Commercial. In the Capital Growth Plan were some concerns about lighting in the building. The Chief did get a quote from someone that works with National Grid coming in at a cost of \$35,000. With a rebate it would be about \$31,000. He said you do not put any money down your bill just goes up about \$300 more per month until that debt is paid off. This would be all lights inside and outside of the building. Mr. Chiacchia asked how much we will be saving each month by doing this new lighting. Chief Nodurf will look into this.

**Discuss and/or take action on any business unknown/unavailable prior to the posting of this agenda:**

**MOTION (SULLIVAN; CHIACCHIA): To adjourn from the Open Meeting at 8:01 pm. Approved 3-0-0**

Submitted by:

Approved as to Form and Content:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sherrie Bellefleur, District Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norman Czech, Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_